

# 2020 Senior Spotlight: Michael Waldron



*Louisburg Sports Zone will be running senior spotlights through April and May everyday (Monday through Friday) in an effort to honor seniors who had their seasons taken away due to the spread of COVID-19.*

Fifteen inches.

That is all that stood between Michael Waldron and his first state medal last year at the Class 4A Kansas State Track and Field Championships in Wichita.

Although he was a little frustrated at the time, Waldron recorded a personal-best throw in the javelin and it was a good way to go into his senior season. Not too bad for an event he only had two years of experience in – and one he nearly gave up on.

“I gave up baseball after my freshman year and went back to track, this time I was competing in the discus throw only, until my mom begged me to try javelin,” Waldron said. “I decided to take her up on her offer and I tried it. I was terrible. I barely threw it 60 feet and for two straight weeks I couldn’t figure it out. I told my parents I was done throwing javelin, but my mom insisted I keep trying.

“That next week, everything finally clicked and I threw one just around 100 feet. We were also measuring that day to see who would go to the first varsity meet and coach (Pete) Skakal

gave me a chance. So yes, javelin is a huge part of my life at the moment. It has taught me that even when a situation or life seems hopeless and there's no light at the end of the tunnel, you still have to power through and have faith."

Waldron is using those words, now, more than ever.

Right before the start of his senior track season – that was all set to give him his first state medal – spring sports across Kansas were canceled due to the spread of COVID-19. Seniors everywhere were left speechless and angry, Waldron included.

"It was a slap in the face – a sucker punch," Waldron said. "At first, I couldn't believe I wouldn't have a senior track season, senior prom or graduation day. Just recently, I thought of how there is also no senior skip day or senior prank day and how there was just so many more activities left in this school year. The hardest thing was thinking about how that last day before spring break, might have been the last time I see some of my fellow seniors for the rest of my life. We are all going our separate ways and for some people that is far away from Louisburg.

"My so-called therapy for all this is just hoping that this pandemic comes to an end soon and maybe just maybe some of these events will be rescheduled, we may have a half-season possibly, who knows. The last thing, I can do is just be ready and stay positive, whether that's staying in shape or throwing my javelin."

Waldron was one of several returning state qualifiers from a season ago and the Wildcats were not only poised for individual success, but team success as well.

"Personally, I think with the addition of a few freshmen jumpers and sprinters, I think we could have won a league championship this year as a team," Waldron said. "On top of that, I think we could've had at least 15 or more boys qualify

for state this year. But with the amount of 'point-getters' we had returning this year, I believe we had a chance to win every meet this year. We had some returning state qualifiers and placers from last year ready to rock and roll this year. Adding those guys and the platoon of newcomers this year, I was excited to see where we would compete as a team at league and regionals."

It has been a busy senior year for Waldron already as he was a starter on the Louisburg football and basketball team and it was a year that featured a lot of highs and lows. Even through all that, he was looking forward to the spring the most.



Louisburg senior Michael Waldron was poised for his state medal this year in the javelin.

"Let's just say I have always loved all my sports equally but this year, in terms of track, I was ecstatic," Waldron said. "I have my own javelin, so I would be throwing it and practicing in my backyard even during my other sports seasons as long as the weather was good. I could not hold back my excitement for the season and having new uniforms was even more thrilling. On top of that, 12 of the 16 javelin throwers last year at state were seniors, so I was ready to shine and hopefully make it back to state and take a step on that podium to receive a state medal."

Waldron's state medal dream, unfortunately, will stay just that. He still has a lot of good memories to hold on to, and that helps during the difficult times as he prepares to throw in college at the University of Central Missouri.

"My favorite moment would have to be the opportunity to throw at KU relays last season," he said. "I mean the state track meet and everything that was included with it was memorable, no doubt, but KU relays was just so surreal. I was throwing against the best of the best in all classes in the state, like multi-time state champions and the nation's leading high school thrower from Manhattan High. I felt like I didn't belong there and that's what made it so special to me.

"To add onto that, having the opportunity to see all the collegiate throwers compete was also extremely cool. I went to this week-long KU Track and Field camp in the summer before my junior year and I met a ton of kids my age doing all sorts of different events and those memories and friendships I created there carried over into this meet. Every 15 minutes, I saw one of my friends from camp and getting to watch them compete and seeing them in the crowd when I was competing was just really special and honestly one my favorite parts of the moment."

Other than track, Louisburg Sports Zone also had a chance to catch up with Michael on how he has been coping with an early end to his senior year and some of his other interests. Here

are his responses from the rest of our Q&A.

**LSZ:** What have you been missing the most during this time away from everyone?

**MW:** Besides missing track the most, I definitely miss seeing my friends and teachers. Also, not being able to go to the gym, movie theater, or simply leave my house is also a huge bummer. I like having school in session, because not only do I see my friends but I feel like I just understand the material and subject better while learning at school. Online school is definitely weird, mostly because I have never taken an online class, but you are also missing that face to face instruction. I guess, you could say I'm missing the "usual" or everyday life. I just feel out of routine.

**LSZ:** What is your most memorable moment as an athlete or in school, and why?

**MW:** I know this isn't spring sports related, but I want to say my most memorable moment as an athlete would be the 25-7 victory (2018) over Paola on their home football field. Both teams were undefeated and fighting for a league championship. We were able to pull off a win there but it wasn't that close of a game. Sure, we didn't score a lot of points but we just dominated. That would be a game and memory I will never forget. As a student, I want to say my most memorable moment would be the Homecoming Day Talent Shows, just remembering all of my classmates up there performing their songs, dances or special talents. But also being able to be up there with my friends my senior year and doing that Mr. LHS pageant was definitely something ingrained into my mind.

**LSZ:** What is your favorite activity/hobby outside of sports and why?

**MW:** I think most boys can agree with me on this one, my favorite hobby outside of sports would be just playing video games. It's even better playing with your friends because then

there's the laughter and the fun that comes with playing the game. It is just a good way to get your mind off of the busyness that surrounds high school athletes and the amount of homework. Now, I only play video games when I have the free time, but it is definitely my favorite hobby.

**LSZ:** I know you are going to throw at Central Missouri next year, but how tough has it been to kind of stay in throwing shape and have you been able to work on that at all on your own?

**MW:** Well, being able to go throw at Central Missouri next year is a blessing, but the preparation surprisingly hasn't been stopped, since I have my own javelin and just about 75 yards of open space in my backyard, I can just throw in my backyard every day. Now, obviously it is different, because not having the instruction that I would have had this track season and not being able to have a coach telling me what I am doing wrong or what I need fix, makes training and preparing a little bit harder. Also, in terms of staying strong and keeping my body in shape, workout equipment is slim at my house which makes workouts difficult to come up with. It's hard not having a weights class or the local gym open, but I do what I can. The positive is that having some equipment rather than none is good and owning a javelin is great, so I can take this extended time and really perfect some techniques before my first collegiate season.

**LSZ:** What accomplishments that don't involve athletics are you most proud of and why?

**MW:** Well, being on the honor roll and getting good grades every year has always been a thing I work for. My GPA is something I am proud of, but I think there is always room for improvement. Taking the advanced science and math classes throughout high school was definitely challenging and I'm glad I could say I had a 3.8 GPA in classes like physics, AP Biology and AP Calculus. But definitely, being a member of

National Honor Society would be my favorite achievement. Lastly, finishing with so many college credits in AP courses and my Accounting classes was my biggest accomplishment, I think, as a student because now I am just more ready for college and the next step in life.

**LSZ:** What do you think would be something that a lot of people don't know about you?

**MW:** Honestly, I don't think that most people know I was originally born in California. I moved here when I was 3, so like it isn't that big of a deal. I have been around here for a bit so no one really knows. All of my relatives are out in California, so not having any of them around throughout my life has been weird. Most people I see have their grandparents at sporting events or awards ceremonies but no one has really asked me about my grandparents, so most people may not know that I grew up in Southern California.

## **Michael's Favorites**

**Pro athlete:** Well, my all-time favorite would be Kobe Bryant, but my current favorite would be Mike Trout.

**Pro team:** Kansas City Chiefs

**College team:** My beloved Kansas State Wildcat Football Team

**Movie:** Remember the Titans

**TV Show:** The Office

**Song:** Stayin' Alive by The Bee Gees

**Band/Musician:** The Bee Gees

**Pregame meal/snack:** My meal would definitely be a chicken bacon ranch sandwich from anywhere. My snack would be a Nature Valley protein bar with a glass of milk.

**Class/subject:** Anything history because it comes easy to me.

**Teacher and why:** Mrs. Lane is definitely my favorite, not only because I have a lot of classes with her, but I just took accounting my junior year not knowing what would become of it. She helped me find what I wanted to major in, I ended up loving accounting and that's what I want to do with my love and that's because of her.

## **Previous Senior Spotlights**

Drake Varns – Golf

Trinity Moore – Girls Soccer

Andrew Krause – Baseball

Kayla Willey – Softball

Anthony Davis – Track and Field

Garrett Rolofson – Golf

Shayla Aye – Swimming

Allie Boles – Softball